

Message Text

SECRET POSS DUPE

PAGE 01 SINGAP 02452 050928Z

47 45

ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 PA-04

RSC-01 USIA-15 PRS-01 SP-03 COA-02 DRC-01 /052 W

----- 024419

R 050800Z JUN 74

FM AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0689

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY KUALALUMPUR

AMEMBASSY MANILA

AMEMBASSY RANGOON

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

S E C R E T SINGAPORE 2452

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR

SUBJECT: SINGAPORE REACTION TO BURMESE SENTENCING
OF CHANGI CREW

REF: A. DAO SINGAPORE TELEGRAM 270502Z, 0654 APR 74;
B. EMBASSY RANGOON A-503

1. SUMMARY: ENGLISH LANGUAGE PRESS REACTED
WITH DISMAY TO NEWS THAT BURMA HAD IMPOSED STIFF
PENALTIES ON CREW MEMBERS OF CHANGI SMS 727,
A SINGAPORE-BASED FISHERIES RESEARCH VESSEL
DETAINED SINCE APRIL 7 AFTER ALLEGEDLY ENTERING
BURMESE WATERS. GOS DELAYED ACTION PENDING WORD
FROM REP IN RANGOON. BURMESE CHARGE DISCOUNTED
POSSIBILITY THAT INCIDENT MIGHT BE SUBJECT OF
DISCUSSION DURING NE WIN'S UPCOMING SINGAPORE
VISIT, BUT EXPRESSED HOPE NE WIN WOULD MAKE
GESTURE OF RELEASING CREW PRIOR TO HIS ARRIVAL END SUMMARY.

2. REPORTS THAT A BURMESE COURT HAD IMPOSED A
ONE YEAR JAIL SENTENCE AND \$40,000 FINE AGAINST
EACH CREW MEMBER OF THE CHANGI SMS 727, A SINGAPORE-

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 SINGAP 02452 050928Z

REGISTERED AND BASED FISHERIES RESEARCH VESSEL
OWNED BY THE SOUTHEAST ASIAN FISHERIES DEVELOPMENT

CENTER (SEAFDC) WHICH WAS DETAINED APRIL 7 AFTER ALLEGEDLY ENTERING BURMESE WATERS, WERE GREETED WITH DISMAY BY THE SINGAPORE ENGLISH-LANGUAGE PRESS. NEW NATION CHARACTERIZED BURMA'S ACTION AS A "BIG BLOW TO REGIONAL COOPERATION" AND SAID PENALTIES IMPOSED WERE "UNDULY HARSH," "IT IS REGRETTABLE THAT ... A REGIONAL GOVERNMENT SHOULD ACT IN SUCH A HOSTILE MANNER TOWARDS AN EFFORT BY COUNTRIES IN THE AREA TO COOPERATE FOR MUTUAL BENEFIT." THE STRAITS TIMES CALLED FOR AN "APPEAL TO A HIGHER BURMESE COURT AND, IF NEED BE, DIPLO-MATIC INITIATIVES TO SECURE THE CREW AND SHIP'S RELEASE, OR MORE EQUITABLE PENALTIES."

3. ACCORDING PRESS REPORT GOS REACTED CAUTIOUSLY TO COURT DECISION. MFA SPOKESMAN WAS REPORTED AS SAYING THAT GOVERNMENT WAS AWAITING A CABLE FROM CHEN FOO YAN, ITS REPRESENTATIVE IN RANGOON, BEFORE DECIDING ON FURTHER ACTION. CHEN, CHIEF OF THE MARINE FISHERIES RESEARCH DEPARTMENT, WAS SENT BY MFA TO RANGOON TO REPRESENT GOS INTERESTS SHORTLY AFTER VESSEL WAS DETAINED.

4. BURMESE CHARGE OHN GYAW ADVISED DCM HE HAD RECOMMENDED TO GOS THAT PRIME MINISTER RELEASE CREW-MEN OR GREATLY REDUCE SENTENCES AS GOOD WILL GESTURE PRIOR TO HIS ARRIVAL IN SINGAPORE. HE WAS OPTIMISTIC BUT NOT CERTAIN THAT THIS WOULD BE DONE. OHN GYAW SAID HE THOUGHT IT UNLIKELY INCIDENT WOULD COME UP IN TALKS DURING NE WIN VISIT. PRIOR TO ANNOUNCE-MENT OF SENTENCES MFA PERMSEC BOGGARS TOLD AMBASSADOR THAT WHILE GOS WAS CONCERNED ABOUT CASE HE DID NOT THINK PM LEE WOULD RAISE IT DURING NE WIN VISIT. NOW THAT SENTENCES HAVE BEEN ANNOUNCED AND HAVE RECEIVED CRITICAL PRESS COMMENT, GOS MIGHT POSSIBLY DECIDE TO RAISE ISSUE IF SENTENCES ARE NOT COMMUTED PRIOR TO NE WIN'S ARRIVAL.

5. OHN GYAW ADVISED DCM THAT GUB CONSIDERED

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 SINGAP 02452 050928Z

VESSEL'S VIOLATION TO BE SERIOUS. HE ALLEGED THAT VESSEL HAD ENTERED BURMESE WATERS ON AT LEAST FIVE OCCASIONS SINCE 1970. RAISING QUESTIONS ABOUT THE PURPOSE OF THE VESSEL'S MEANDERINGS, HE NOTED THAT IT CARRIED SEISMIC EQUIPMENT WHICH WAS MORE USEFUL FOR OIL EXPLORATION THAN FISH RESEARCH. HE ALSO POINTED OUT THAT BURMESE INVESTIGATORS HAD DISCOVERED 12,000 POUNDS OF FISH ABOARD WHICH SEEMED EXCESSIVE IF VESSEL ONLY INTERESTED IN RESEARCH. OHN GYAW MENTIONED

TO DCM THAT HE WAS AWARE GOS DEFENSE MINISTER
GOH KENG SWEE HAD MENTIONED INCIDENT TO ADMIRAL
DE POIX; (SEE REFERENCE A TELEGRAM). WHEN DCM ASSURED OHN
GYAW THAT US HAD NO INTEREST IN THE MATTER, OHN GYAW
SAID HE UNDERSTOOD THIS BUT HAD REPORTED IT TO
RANGOON AS EVIDENCE OF MEASURE OF GOS CONCERN.
GRANT

SECRET

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: FISHERIES, RESEARCH, SHIP DETENTION, TERRITORIAL WATERS VIOLATIONS, TWELVE MILE LIMIT, CHANGI, MERCHANT SEAMEN
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 05 JUN 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: cunninfx
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974SINGAP02452
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D740142-1234
From: SINGAPORE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19740672/aaaackna.tel
Line Count: 122
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EA
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: A. DAO SINGAPORE TELEGRAM 270502Z, 0, 654 APR 74;
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: cunninfx
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 10 JUL 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <10 JUL 2002 by elyme>; APPROVED <20 FEB 2003 by cunninfx>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: SINGAPORE REACTION TO BURMESE SENTENCING OF CHANGI CREW
TAGS: PFOR, SN, BM
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005